

Rethinking Cultural Brokers: How to Make Ecotourism Work

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[*Abstract*]

This paper discusses the cultural practices in ecotourism among the residents group in the Ubud region of Bali. It examines the role of the village youth group for the in ecotourism practices and explores as well as their role as a means of in achieving existential authenticity. The community-based tourism (CBT) program run by the youth group of Sebatu Village is similar to like the existing commercial trekking tours. By utilizing the natural and cultural resources of the village in which they live, they use the Balinese tradition combined with the spatial and existential authenticity of the Sebatu Village. In addition, previously marginalized resident groups are participating actively in ecotourism and this experience is providing economic benefits and new understanding of their traditional Balinese culture. In the end, this article will provide a new perspective on who should be the main agents in the tourism commercialization process that utilizes traditional culture in the tourism area.

Keywords: cultural brokers, ecotourism, Banjar Sebatu, community-based tourism (CBT), existential authenticity

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I . Introduction

This study is based on an ethnographic fieldwork among male youth group in Banjar Sebatu or Sebatu Village, located in the central part of Bali, Indonesia. This paper discusses alternative tourism mainly within the framework of ecotourism, which is the main form of tourism in this region. In particular, it examines the relationship between the role of a “culture brokers” (Adams 1984; Brown 1992; Crick 1994; Smith & Brent 2001; Buntun 2010; Mckean 2011; Sun & Xie 2020) and existential authenticity (Wang 1999; Regmi & Walter 2016; Cohen 2018; Walter 2020) in the practice of ecotourism. Ultimately, this study is a discussion on how the role of a “cultural broker” in the process of ecotourism practice leads to changes in the village community and alternative tourism.

In tracing the history of tourism in Bali, “cultural tourism” stands at the center of tourism in this region. Bali is consumed as the image of “the last paradise on earth” by Western tourists and various cultural products based on Bali-Hindu culture is maximized by this image. However, in the process of rising as a popular tourist destination, the ecological and cultural elements of Bali were negatively affected in the development process.

Recently, alternative tourism, such as ecotourism, is attracting attention as a means to overcome the negative factors of mass tourism. In addition, along with the current movement in ecotourism and the perceptions of tourists who consumes this product can offer a solution to overcome various problems posed by mass tourism. Alternative tourism, for example, is a form of tourism one that is that are consistent with natural, social, and community values, which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences (Smith & Eadington 1992: 3; Stronza 2001: 274).

Currently, the most popular cultural resource for ecotourism in Bali is are trekking tours that introduces rice terraces and jungles. The rice terraces, rainforests, and traditional villages are appropriately configured as trekking courses and promoted as ecotourism products to tourists. From the past, rice farming was the

main source of economic production in Bali and is managed by the subak system or traditional irrigation system. Subak is a unique cultural landscape of Bali and is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognized for *krama subak* (working partnership), rice terraces, canal, water temple, cooperatives, and *Tri Hita Karana* meaning Balinese philosophical principle meaning three causes of goodness.

Rice has been staple food for Bali for thousands of years. To feed the large population, Balinese had to develop resource-intensive rice production method and naturally “set up a complex wet-rice growing system, where the rivers which run off the mountains could be turned into an intricate system of channels and terraces” (Vickers 1989: 8).

Subak is undergoing rapid changes as Bali developed as a tourist destination. Existing farmland is transformed into tourism-related facilities, leading to a decrease in the absolute number of subak members (*krama subak*). In particular, subak is highlighted for “sustainable tourism,” “alternative tourism,” and “ecotourism,” as an object to overcome the negative effects of mass tourism and the landscape of rice terraces and nearby surroundings has become a tourism product.

In other words, the rice terraces that was used for rice production has become an object of ecotourism and a spectacular landscape in itself, and dams and waterways built to supply water to the rice fields are used as rural roads for walking tours. The most dramatic expansion of this meaning is in the nearby rural village of Ubud, located in the central region of Bali.

In the end, the meaning of the word, subak is expanded in various ways through the tourism development. The natural environment of the tropical rainforest area, human activities for survival and economic growth became the basis of a new type of tourism resource. On this basis, the influx of tourists interlocked with the abovementioned changes resulted in a new social and cultural interaction.

The aforementioned discussion raises the following questions.

Can ecotourism—which is attracting attention as a form of alternative tourism—overcome the existing problems of mass tourism? Who is practicing ecotourism in Ubud, and are their activities properly realizing the purposes of ecotourism? Existing studies have not adequately addressed the above questions. This is due to the fact that existing studies did not understand or sometimes did not properly consider the main producers of ecotourism. Particularly, in the case of Ubud, trekking is a kind of tourism business, and the role of the host society, such as the resident group was overlooked, and their practice not appropriately revealed.

This paper discusses the cultural practice of the youth group for ecotourism in Sebatu village. Furthermore, this study examines the role of the village youth group for the in ecotourism practices, as well as and explores their role as a means of in achieving existential authenticity (Wang 1999; Steiner & Reisinger 2006; Rickly-Boyd 2013). Ultimately, this study will provide a new perspective on which groups should act as main agents in the tourism commercialization process through the use of traditional culture in the tourism area.

This paper is based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Ubud and Sebatu from 2012 to 2014. In addition, an additional survey was conducted in August 2019 to trace the changing aspects of ecotourism and the expanding role of the youth group. Field research was based on in-depth interviews and participant observations.

During the fieldwork, I routinely participated in the village youth group meetings, villagers's group meetings (*Sangkep Banjar*), and the trekking program. The questions raised during the fieldwork are as follows. ; first, how effective is the trekking program run by young people in the development of Sebatu Village? ; second, how is the trekking program operated by village youth different from the existing programs run by outsiders? How much does this program help to develop the village? ; third, in what direction should the village develop in the future? Should economic interests be prioritized or the solidarity of the community should be promoted

despite the fact that it may not maximize economic benefit?

The research reported in this paper was conducted in the Banjar Sebatu, located in the central region of Bali. The village of Sebatu is geographically located about 15 km north of the Ubud Royal Palace (*Puri Saren Agung*). The administrative district of the Sebatu village (*Banjar*) is Sebatu Village (*Desa Sebatu*), Tegallalang District (*Kecamatan Tegallalang*), Gianyar Regency (*Kabupaten Gianyar*) of Bali Province (*Provinsi Bali*).

The total population of Sebatu village is about 3,500 people consisting of 700 households. The population of adults over 20 is about 3,000 people. The size of the village is relatively small compared to the neighboring villages with 5,000 to 10,000 people. Sebatu is located in the area of the greater Ubud area. Most of the residents are engaged in agricultural work, and some are engaged in tourism and carpentry manufacturing.

Sebatu is located in the area of the greater Ubud area. Most of the residents are engaged in agricultural work, and some are into tourism and carpentry manufacturing. With the growing number of young generations, the number of agricultural workers is decreasing sharply, as most of them are engaged in tourism-related businesses. Most of the villagers are involved with the tourism industry in one way or another, including operations of lodging facilities, hotel-related services, businesses, taxis, tourist shops and restaurants.

Sebatu is strategically located en route to the Ubud - Kintamani Volcano tour and many tourists visit the village because it is one of the stopping points along the way. However, most tourists do not choose to stay in Sebatu and often stay in hotels in the Ubud area, where there are more options. Nevertheless, as the community-based tourism package (hereafter, CBT) are gaining attraction in recent years, a small number of tourists are finding accommodation in the Sebatu Village.

From the past to the present, the woodcraft of this region have been handed down from generation to generation and recognized for its high quality and technology. There are still a number of

woodcraft shops around Sebatu, serving as wholesalers providing woodcrafts to retailers in Ubud. On the other hand, Sebatu is also highly regarded for their artists, especially Balinese Gamelan and dance performances, as they have performed all over the world, especially in European countries. For this, Sebatu is known as the arts hub of the region.

Nevertheless, Sebatu is relatively geographically far from Ubud and many residents often express feeling a sense of relative deprivation to Ubud—and nearby banjars that experienced economic growth—as it was unable to enjoy the economic benefits of tourism development.

II. Ecotourism, Existential Authenticity and Cultural Brokers

The existence of tourists or foreigners constitutes various economic, social, and cultural layers. Therefore, tourist destinations provide a multilayered forum for discussing the experiential aspects of cultural acculturation in a society. In early studies on the cultural change in tourist destinations, negative aspects such as destruction of traditional culture were often emphasized (Turner & Ash 1975; Rosenow 1979; Smith 2012).

However, Bali is a region providing a new perspective on tourism and cultural changes. In the early 20th century, Balinese ethnic art was developed by the concept of a newly created tradition. Tourism has been used as a means of strengthening local traditions (Cohen 1989), or sometimes creating or reinterpreting traditional culture (Yamashita 1996). The development of tourism has led to the process of preservation, creation and reinterpretation of traditional Balinese culture, which is the main direction of Balinese research in tourism anthropology (Picard 1997).

A point of interest in tourism research in Bali is that it presents a new perspective on “authenticity” in tourism. The perception and interpretation of Bali's traditional culture and the viewpoint of tourists are presented as examples that can overcome the existing “objective authenticity.” It is related to the question of

what “authenticity” is acquired through tourism experience and how it can be acquired (Pitana 1993). In the end, the process of how Bali’s traditional culture is contextualized and socially constructed by tourists and resident groups is closely connected to “existential authenticity.”

Furthermore, “existential authenticity” (Wang 1999) is noteworthy, which is an alternative concept of the existing objective and constructive authenticities, and the result of ontological recognition derived from the tourist’s tourism experience. Acquisition of existential authenticity through the “involution of tradition” in the Bali tourism process enables a new interpretation of the tourism experience (Jeong 2022).

Traditional culture experienced in the course of tourism inevitably marks the outset of mutual exchange between tourists and local residents. It is assumed that the discussion of socio-cultural phenomena derived from this process reflects the fundamental value of tourism anthropology. In particular, the process of preserving traditional culture and mutual understanding is in alignment with the values and philosophy pursued by ecotourism. Tourists who practice ecotourism and the orientation of ecotourism are presented as an alternative to overcome the existing problems of mass tourism. In particular, ecotourism, which is a form of niche tourism and sustainable tourism, also fall in the category of “ecological-cultural tourism” (Russel and Wallace 2004), in that it considers respecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources of the tourist destination as the most important value.

The rising interest in ecotourism in tourism anthropology is reflective of the negative impact of mass tourism on the local area. In particular, the need for ecotourism is raised as an alternative to fill the gap of mass tourism between the perception of the environmental destruction and economic growth of local residents (Lindberg & Lindberg 1991; Whelan 1991; Wall 1997; Barkin 1998; Ross & Wall 1999; Zeppel 2006; Büscher 2010; Fletcher & Neves 2012; Mowforth & Munt 2015; Büscher, Bremer, Fletcher, & Koot 2017).

In addition, the demand of tourists for new tourism products

is also a factor that brought ecotourism in focus. In the case of Bali, Ubud region is newly in the limelight as an ecotourism destination as a place where nature and traditional culture are in harmonious balance that appropriately addresses of the problem of monotonous tourism centered on coastal sightseeing tours.

Nevertheless, the value of realizing economic benefits through commercial use is placed with greater importance than the sustainability of environmental conservation, community maintenance, and traditional cultural values in Bali's ecotourism. In particular, the existence of residential tourist (Jeong 2022)—a new type of tourism group centered around the Ubud region—highlights the multilayered aspect of ecotourism operation.

One of the factors that long-term foreign tourists (hereinafter referred to as foreign residents) to Ubud reside in this area is their preference for the nature and the diverse sociocultural environment stemming from traditional Balinese culture. Nevertheless, the urban lifestyle they pursue in Ubud deviates from the goals of ecotourism, which include environmental pollution, groundwater depletion, and alienation from the village community (Jeong 2022).

According to Wall (1994), ecotourism is depicted as an “old wine in new bottles,” which raises the questions of practical relevance of ecotourism. It is pointed out that ecotourism, which is required to play a role as a substitute for mass tourism, cannot be strictly distinguished from mass tourism in the real world, and is sometimes interdependent or partially overlaps. Skeptical views about the sustainability of environmental conservation also deserves noticing (Padgett & Begley 1996; Issacs 2000).

These negative aspects of ecotourism are caused by various factors, but it is clear that without proper planning and management, ecotourism cannot succeed (Boo 1993). Ecotourism is a complex phenomenon that involves integration of many actors including tourists, residents, suppliers, and managers with multiple functions (Ceballos-Lascurin 1993).

The roles of various actors exist in the operation of ecotourism, and how they view tourism corresponds to the success

or failure of it. Of course, ecotourism protects the environment while contributing to socio-economic development, and strives for sustainability (Ross & Wall 1999: 124). Among the various measures to maintain sustainability, it is necessary to consider the actors that run the ecotourism. The intervention of local communities in the tourism process, autonomous operations, and recognition of complementary nature of biological diversity are the successful operating methods of ecotourism. Nevertheless, the theoretical and ethnographic examples of these aspects are insufficiently discussed and only the justifiable need and legitimacy of the activities of the local community are emphasized.

In this respect, the role of a “culture broker” deserves attention as it connects hosts and tourists and projects the perspective of tourism in the interpretation of tradition and culture (Adams 1984; Brown 1992; Crick 1994; Smith & Brent 2001; Bunten 2010; Mckean 2011; Sun & Xie 2020). In the meantime, the concept of a broker in tourism has a superficial or transitory attribute, and sometimes, there is an asymmetrical aspect between hosts and tourists (Crick 1994). On the other hand, recent tourism scholars argue for the need to consider the role of brokers as central to the development and promotion of contemporary tourism (Salazar 2010).

To tourists, a broker is still seen as a person distinct from the locals, and at the same time, one who is recognized as a person who plays a role of mediators to increase the satisfaction and efficiency of their travel. However, brokers are sometimes perceived as people who recommend and force unnecessary optional tours, or they are denigrated as scammers with bilingual skills.

This study focuses on the role of cultural brokers practiced by resident groups in the practice of ecotourism. At the same time, I focus on the means of acquiring existential authenticity by breaking away from the discussion limited to the existing tourism objects for their dynamic roles. To this end, this suggests a way to achieve the ultimate goal of ecotourism—the continuous maintenance of the traditional culture of the community. It will also be a starting point to raise new awareness of the traditions of the resident groups in the process of tourism development.

III. Aspects of Eco-Cultural Tourism in Bali

3.1. Eco-Cultural Tourism in Bali

Along with the Indonesian government's tourism policy, the Bali provincial government needed to present a suitable tourism policy that reflected the reality of Bali. To this end, the Bali provincial government adopted “cultural tourism” (*Pariwisata Budaya*) as the core of its tourism policy. This can be understood in two aspects.

First, the practice of cultural tourism is actually used as a tourism resource in Bali. This is due to the image of “real Bali” that provoked the interest of tourists, exemplified in novels, films, and songs from the period considered the “Renaissance of Bali” – named by artists who lived in Bali before the Second World War.

Second, cultural tourism focused on overcoming the “challenges of tourism” (*tantangan pariwisata*), that is, overcoming various social problems brought by mass tourists. In the process of cultural tourism, it presumed that it would bring greater interest in the local souvenirs, and respect for Bali's traditional customs and culture. “Cultural tourism,” adopted as the official policy of Bali, enabled the region to play a role as a tourist destination differentiated from other resorts.

However, the growing interest in cultural tourism and the environmental destruction experienced in the process of tourism have resulted in a decrease in the area of tourism, which began at the earliest stage of promoting the “marvelous” natural environment experiences. Tourism in Bali has also gone through a similar historical process. Images of a brown girl with beautiful breasts, palm trees and a rippling sea represented Bali as an “island of paradise” in the southern sea (Covarrubias 2015).

Since then, large-scale visits by tourists have brought side effects such as environmental destruction, depletion of water resources, and damage to traditional culture in the era of mass tourism and cultural tourism. The tourism industry needed to develop new types of travel products. Moreover, tourists also pursued new values and meanings through tourism experience, not

simply pursuing leisure and pleasure. In the end, ecotourism is the area that was sought in the process of realizing these desires of tourists in the tourism industry.

In addition, since the 1990s, international interest in environmental issues has led to a social movement called the “Green Bali,” which is also closely linked to tourism development. In particular, the concept of “sustainable development,” which has emerged as a dominant discourse in the international community, is presented, thereby proving that the natural environment can be utilized in various fields of society.

In the case of Bali, a new type of tourism was derived as the cultural tourism products typified by the existing traditional performances and cultural experience programs were combined with the natural environment of Bali. In the end, ecotourism in Bali is understood as a kind of “eco-cultural tourism” (Wallace & Russel 2004) that emphasizes the proactive and practical role of local residents that originated in the cultural tourism process. Accordingly, ecotourism does not stop at experiencing and preserving local natural resources, but also considers cultural resources as an important value that deserves respect and preservation.

3.2. Exclusion of Local Residents in Tourism

Desa Sebatu is perceived by foreigners as a large area of Ubud, but it actually belongs to Kecamatan Tegallalang and not Kecamatan Ubud, in terms of its administrative districts. From the past to the present, this area has been recognized as an area with excellent woodworking skills in the Ubud area, and related woodcraft products are highly valued. The village of Sebatu consists of a total of 8 banjars, and woodcrafts are mainly made in Apuh Village (Banjar Apuh) and Sebatu Village (Banjar Sebatu).

In the past, high-quality woodworking areas were considered to be products of Desa Sebatu, but strictly speaking, they are products from Apuh Banjar and Sebatu Banjar. However, at present, most tourists do not distinguish items by these production locations of banjar units when purchasing woodcraft products. Most tourist

perceive Ubud as an “artist village,” and assume that all woodcrafts are commonly produced in the Ubud region. Moreover, in the process of looking for cheap woodcraft products, high-quality woodcraft products marked with the artist’s name go unrecognized and underappreciated.

Another example is the practice of trekking, one of Ubud's representative tourism products. Currently, a trekking tourism product called “ecotourism” is operated in Ubud. The Ubud Tourist Center (*Yayasan Bina Wisata*) near the Ubud Royal Palace introduces a variety of tourism products organized by individuals and travel agencies. It is a course designed to experience Bali's nature on foot or by bicycle, or visit traditional villages for a cultural experience. The unique feature of the Ubud trekking tour is that the start and end of the tour is often in the village where the guide lives.

In the morning, we pick up guests from Ubud, Sanur, or as far away as Kuta, and bring them to our house, or if we think we'll be late, we do a brief orientation at the village entrance. Sometimes, I go straight to the top of the mountain from Kuta. If it's not too late, I try to start trekking in town if possible. The bike tour begins by going to another village on the way down. Almost all of them are held in our village. I have already gotten permission from the villagers. Most of all, I know our village the best. There's a lot to explain.

Parus (Trekking guide, male in his 40's, personal interview, October 5, 2013)

Trekking mainly takes place in the village where the guide lives, because for tourists, banjar is an area that represents ecotourism and traditional culture in itself. In the past, banjar in the periphery of Ubud was not widely recognized. But through trekking, it became possible to acquire the symbol of ecotourism and traditional culture.

Nevertheless, in the context of the construction of the image of Ubud represented as an “artist village” and a commercial and transportation center, the surrounding areas are still marginalized in terms of tourism development. In the process of promoting trekking

programs, the guide introduces the various sociocultural resources of his banjar, but most tourists recognize the representation and sense of place as an extended area of Ubud.

In the end, when tourists revisit the Bali region or look for a house for a long-term stay, the experience of visiting banjar while trekking is not practically manifested. Due to this, only a few people in the center of Ubud are able to seize the benefits of symbol and sense of place of this location where traditional culture is preserved and maintained, and where ecotourism is possible through various methods such as trekking.

IV. The Sabtu Youth Group (Sabtu Pemuda) as Mediators and Innovators

4.1. The Role of the Youth in Banjar

Traditional Balinese villages (*pakraman banjar*) conduct village rituals through a hierarchy of villages. Odalans, funerals (*ngaben*), and other rituals performed in temples on specific days are actually important events in that they involve large numbers of people and a significant amount of money. In the village of Sabtu, most of the villagers participate in the Odalan rite of the temple located in the village, conducted under a huge budget. In the case of the Odalan ritual, *kelian*, the village chief, also heads the villager's group meetings (*Sangkep Banjar*) and takes on the role of chief of the Odalan ceremonies.

Sangkep Banjar is an organization made up of married men assigned the roles of a village keeper, *pecalang*, and a music player, *gong gede*. *Kelian's* wife serves as the head (*ketua*) of the women's organization of the village (*PKK: Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga Sabtu*). During the ceremony, women are in charge of preparing sacrifices, performances, and village cleaning.

Odalans is a ritual in which most of the villagers participate, but the role of the village's youth organization, *pemuda*, is very limited. Generally, in Balinese society, married males are regarded as a "whole" adult and included in the *krama banjar*. Marriage,

whether young or old, determines whether or not a person is a full member of the krama banjar. Therefore, village youth group, pemuda, usually consists of unmarried men aged 17 and over. Ten years ago, most men in Bali married in their early twenties, so the members of pemuda were usually between the ages of 17 and early 20s and there were between 10 to 20 people per village in the group. However, due to the recent delay in marriage, there are about 40 to 50 men now and age up to mid to late 20s.

Currently, there are about 50 men in the youth organization of Sebatu Village. In principle, unmarried men over the age of 17 are members of pemuda, but in recent years, unmarried men in their late 30s have also been active as pemuda members. Pemuda participates in various ceremonies at village temples as a member of a family unit, but does not play a role in organizing official ceremonial events. In other words, they cannot participate in ritual-related preparations required for adult men, such as making temporary huts or foundations during the ceremony.

The ceremonial activities in which the pemuda members mainly participate is in the production of *ogho-ogho* required for the Ngrupuk Parade in Bali's Nepyi eve, called the "Day of Silence." Pemuda members make *ogho-ogho* at the town hall about a month before Nepyi and they are entrusted with marching on the eve of Nepyi. This is due to the fact that a lot of manpower is required in a series of ceremonial preparation including *ogho-ogho* production and marching, and the artistic sense and dexterity of young people are also essential. Therefore, it is considered realistically reasonable for the pemuda members, who are mainly students, to take charge of the *ogho-ogho* ritual part of the ceremony.

The villagers of Sebatu inherit their traditions and lead the community by organizing various subgroups according to gender, social status, and age. While the pemuda members cannot attend the community meeting to play a key role in decision-making process in the village community, but they acquire an identity as a community member by obtaining a certain role as the new generation of the village that will inherit the tradition. Ary, a member of the village community and an advisor to the youth

group, explains this role and maintenance of the village community in Sebatu in the following statement:

Ubud will continue to develop as a tourist destination. Just because tourism is developing, it does not mean that Sebatu will disappear or people will leave this village. I also work in a hotel in Ubud, but I will never leave this place. I don't think it's realistically possible. In the end, I think it is important to find a way to keep the traditions, such as rituals, and the village need to continue to develop. It would be nice if the youth in the village, my son, and his friends live up to their traditions while also live economically affluent lives through tourism.

Ary (Male, 30s, personal interview, November 21, 2013)

Like Ary's remarks, the village of Sebatu defines the identity of the village as a religious and a local community. It is a very important value in their daily life to pursue Hindu values, the common religion of the residents, and to continuously perform various religious ceremonial acts. Preserving the peace of the community through maintaining tradition is seen as an important value in their lives. In addition, another important issue is fulfilling the realistic desire to acquire economic wealth. In the end, the village of Sebatu is "*gemeninschaft*," which means "community" as defined by Ferdinand J. Tonnies (1957) and the activities of pemuda can be understood as an extension of acts to maintain stability in the community based on Hindu religious values.

4.2. Community-Based Tourism (CBT) of the Young Generation in Sebatu

In recent years, trekking is actively promoted in the greater Ubud area, a phenomenon that symbolically illustrates various changes taking place in the current Ubud region. These changes can be observed through places, people (trekking leaders), and the values surrounding trekking and the tourists who take part in it. The increase in people's interest in the environment has led to interest in preserving the environment in the process of travel. Trekking in the Ubud region is developed as a tourism product that satisfies such needs of the tourists.

Westerners, who understood these needs of tourists, began to take part in this industry and developed tourism programs to satisfy the desires of tourists. They began to introduce eco-friendly and exotic landscapes of rice fields, including subak of villages near Ubud and sawah (paddy fields). These programs operated in small units on foot or by bicycle, and as the popularity grew, the number of companies have surged in recent years that offered similar programs.

Consequently, the satisfaction with the trekking company began to gradually decrease with the surge of companies offering similar programs. As the villages and individual rice fields were opened to visitors, it brought unexpected conflicts within the village. In the village of Sebatu alone, only the companies operating the trekking program and those residents that were involved obtained economic benefits. Several villagers criticized this aspect at the village meeting. Furthermore, villagers complained about the tourists that ignored the rules of the village temples when they visited and frequent trespassing of the rice fields and damages to crops created in the process. The village resident association notified the trekking companies and prohibited them from using Sebatu village in their course for the trekking program.

However, positive aspects to running a trekking program cannot be overlooked. In particular, Sebatu is strategically located en route to the Ubud-Kintamani Volcano tour. There is also a well-known Gunung Kawi Sebatu Temple in the village, which has a cultural heritage that stimulates the curiosity of tourists.

With this in mind, pemuda of Sebatu, began to develop and operate trekking-related products on their own. The idea of operating a trekking program was first suggested by Ary, a hotelier in Ubud. Ary works as a hotel manager and he recommends various cultural experience programs to visitors of the hotel. He introduces companies that operate trekking programs in Ubud to tourists and earns commission and extra income from this.

Ary paid attention to the potential of ecological and cultural resources of his hometown of Sebatu, and decided to develop a trekking program there. The development and operation of the

program was decided with pemuda, a youth group in the village. The reason why Ary runs this program with the village youth was above all, to collaboratively overcome the realistic situation faced by the village youths.

As Ubud developed into a tourist destination, the economic achievements of local residents related to tourism were remarkable. As existing farmland was transformed into a residential area, a huge price difference was obtained, and created more income through tourism rather than agriculture. However, for young people who did not own farmland, tourism development only highlighted their economic deprivation and difficulties in living.

As it developed into a tourist destination, the price of Ubud also rose high enough for travelers from developed countries to afford it. In the past, villagers could succeed in farming following the footsteps of their fathers, but now, farming no longer guaranteed sufficient economic benefits to live in their hometowns. There is also a belief that for the younger generation, engaging in tourism-related work rather than farming provides greater economic gain and self-actualization.

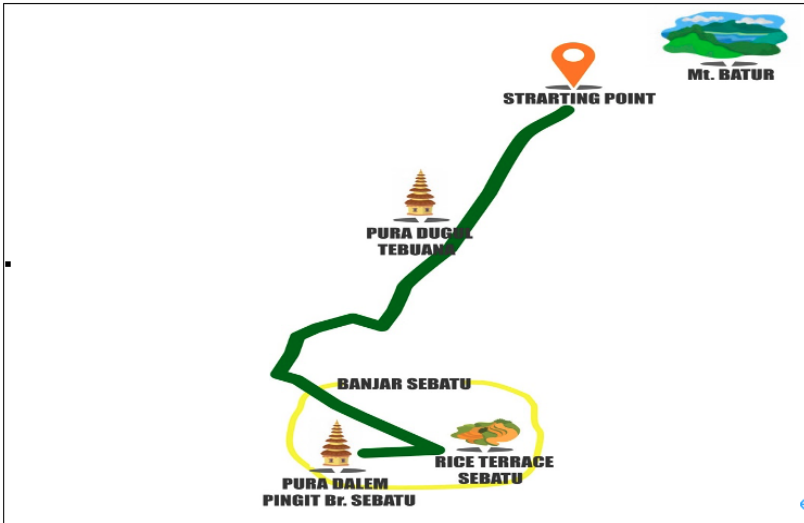
For Ary to run the program, he needed permission from the village resident association. According to him, he had a plan to operate a purification rite experience program at the “Holy Spring” of the Pura Dalem Pingit Banjar Sebatu Temple, one of the sacred site of the village. For the Balinese, water is an element of purification and “*melukat*” is an important ritual of purification which cleanses the mind, body and soul from various impurities. This temple is well-known across Bali by locals and foreigners and people frequently visited for meditation and purification purposes.

At the meeting of the village association, Ary raised a concern with the young people. The village chief, Bendesa, placed great significance on Ary's collaborative operation with the young people, and asked the residents to make sure that there would not be any inconvenience in running the program. Ary expressed his gratitude to the village association and promised to donate 3 percent of the profits to the village, once the program took off and stabilized.

The trekking program was titled “Jalan Melali,” meaning “a way through.” A total of two trekking courses were designed by the youths of Sebatu Village. The course involved travel in two parts by either bicycle or car and later on foot. Ary planned to expand this business to include a homestay program at villager's homes once the trekking program matured and stabilized. An example of the trekking program is provided below (Table 1) (Figure 1).

<Table 1> Jalan Melali Trekking Program

Jalan Melali: A True Adventure Trek	
7:30	Pick up in the Ubud Area
9:00	Mount Batur- Kintamani Volcanic Zone Breakfast and Volcanic Field Tour
10:00	First Stop: Pura Dugul Tebuana (the temple of the Goddess Dewi Sri)
10:00-11:00	Guides explain the "Subak" system and management of the irrigation system in the village
11:00	Arrive at the temple called "Dewi" and the temple of Sebatu's ancestors
11:00-12:00	Terraced rice fields in Sebatu and trekking in the valley
12:00	Arrive at the temple called "Dalem" for the purification
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Return by care



<Figure 1> Jalan Melali Trekking Courses

The “Jalan Melali Trekking Program” starts around 9 am at the summit of Mount Batur with the introduction of the itinerary, breakfast and tour of the volcanic area. Bicycle trekking tourists starts by coming downhill from the Mount Batur. Tourists who trek on foot visit the first stop, Pura Dugul Tebuana by car. Here, tourists are told about the traditional Balinese suri group, the subak, the associated deity Dewi Sri, and the temple.

Afterwards, tourists move to Sebatu Village by bicycle or vehicle. Before arriving at the village, they learn about the history and traditions of the village while admiring the landscape of rice terraces and jungle. Around 11 am, tourists arrive at the Pura Dewi Sebatu Temple at the northern entrance of Sebatu Village. Through a visit to a temple related to the spirit of an ancestor who protects the village, tourists learn about the concept of reincarnation and funeral rituals (ngaben) in Bali-Hindu culture. After arriving at the center of the village, they receive an explanation about the history and origins of the village.

Then around 12 pm, the tour group arrives at the Pura Dalem Pingit Banjar Sebatu Temple for a purification ritual. The temple caretaker greets the tourists and introduces them to the general history of the temple and then guides the trekking participants into the temple where the Holy Spring is located. Participants stand under the falling water to purify and cleanse their mind and soul. (Figure 2).



<Figure 2> Trekking involves walking through rice fields, visiting villages, and participating in rituals.

Source: Facebook Jalan Melali <https://www.facebook.com/Jalan-Melali-353627808035329/>

After the purification ceremony, trekking participants visit the homes of pemuda members and have lunch prepared by the pemuda family while they listen to the detailed explanations about the structure of traditional Balinese houses. Pemuda members take turns preparing lunch at their homes during each trekking session. After lunch, the half day trekking course ends.

The cultural experience program that Ary runs with the young villagers is not much different from the existing trekking program in Ubud. Typical trekking products include "See the Real Bali," "Your Local Travel in Ubud," "Bali, Off Course Guided Walking Tour," and "Bali Nature Walk." The program is conducted to promote the understanding the structures of Bali's traditional village and enjoy beautiful landscapes like rice terraces. Traditional Balinese food are served for breakfast and lunch. However, there are also differences with the existing trekking programs that distinguishes the tour programs of pemuda.

First, in the practice of ecotourism, subak and traditional temples in the village are used as major tourist courses. Western tourists fall in love with the spectacular view of rice terraces. The terraced rice fields located in the middle of the rainforest provide a fantastic scenery. Tourists listen to explanations about the world cultural heritage of Bali subak and learn to appreciate various forms of terraced rice fields and waterways.

In the course of the trek, Jalan Melali program introduces how subaks are operated and the path of waterway that flows to form the rice terraces of Sebatu village. The priority of Jalan Melali program to promote a better understanding of the subak of Sebatu village. Although the rice terraces are not perfect in its form or have a wide and straight waterway, it provides tourists the opportunity to understand the "real" Balinese subak by watching farmers working on the field and seeing the actual rice fields being cultivated. Moreover, tourists can directly experience purification rituals and envisage the meaning it has for Balinese while bathing under the waterfall of the village temple.

Comparatively, the Jalan Melali program promotes tourists to understand the mutual relationship between subak and Balinese

traditions while other trekking programs mainly focus on the landscape of the rice terraces. Balinese tradition, which was projected onto as an unspecified and vague place previously, now projected onto a specific place called Sebatu, and can be understood in terms of “sense of place” and a part of a process of achieving existential authenticity.

Second, since the program is operated centered on the village of Sebatu, the economic benefits of the operation of this program ultimately fall on the village. The bike trek at Jalan Melali runs for \$47 and the foot trek runs for \$30. This is about \$10 cheaper than other trekking programs in Ubud. The cost is reduced from lower labor cost as young villagers are directly operating the tours and above all, the cost of visiting subaks, villages, and temples are significantly reduced as it is operated locally. In using the facilities of Sebatu, the village youth donate 3% of the total profit to the village, so a virtuous cycle is created in which economic profits from Jalan Melali program operation is returned to Sebatu village.

The existing ecotourism structure was based on the principle that it promoted development through the preservation of the villagers and the natural environment of the tourist destination. However, this was realistically difficult to achieve as more people got involved and different roles developed for tourists, villagers, suppliers, and managers. The Jalan Melali program was efficient and led to practical economic achievements as younger Sebatu villagers played the roles of villagers, suppliers, and managers at the same time. This demonstrated the importance of the role of various actors plays in determining the successful operation of ecotourism.

The Jalan Melali program was preliminarily operated in 2012 and was fully implemented from 2013. Afterwards, some private houses in the village were opened to homestays, and tourists or long-term residents who experienced the Jalan Melali program were invited to the village's Odalan ritual to continuously promote the village's cultural tradition. One of the most noteworthy projects is the operation of restaurants and villas in the form of a youth cooperative in the center of Ubud in 2017, led by young people from the village. This change can be attributed to the young villagers

increased contacts with foreigners and economic benefits from the Jalan Melali program and their growing confidence accumulated from the experience.

Third, since the Jalan Melali program is operated centered on the village, the villagers are encouraged to reflect and evaluate on the current program and make suggestions for future development. In the past, the young people of the village considered that the village had not developed into a tourist destination because Sebatu lacked special rice terraces and spectacular cultural heritages and the long geographical distance from Ubud.

However, as the Jalan Melali program progressed, young villagers continued to receive feedback from tourists of various nationalities and learned that many tourists that come to Bali—especially those that are interested in ecotourism—do not simply want glamorous and massive cultural heritages. Rather, many tourists were impressed and moved by the nature-friendly environment, real Balinese lifestyle, and daily practices of rituals in village temples including seeing daily prayers of villagers in their Balinese traditional costumes.

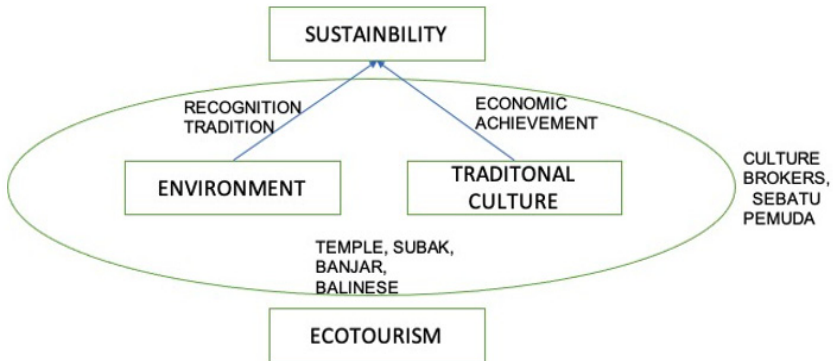
This is connected with the new understanding of the tradition of the villagers. It is possible to escape from the point that tradition is created in the past and transmitted to the present, and the concept that tradition is embodied in a tangible cultural resource. Primarily, the villagers arouse the interest of tourists by maintaining their traditions and demonstrating traditional rituals. In addition, it is noteworthy that the satisfaction of the program increased as tourists interacted with villagers through direct observation of villagers' daily lives or participation in the ritual's ceremonies of the village.

Specifically, the sceneries of farmers working in the rice fields and *canang sari*, a kind of daily sacrifice to the gods, and villagers in their traditional clothes, provide tourists with an opportunity to observe this performance behind the “stage” and subsequently increase tourism satisfaction. In the end, this discourse on tradition makes villagers to reexamine their tradition, and it is understood as a part of the process of acquiring ontological recognition, that is,

existential authenticity as the main agents of the tourism experience.

In this end, the case of Sebatu Village highlights the importance of the role of hosts in the practice of ecotourism. In particular, it is significant in that the young villagers, who were relatively marginalized in the process of rituals and economic activities, performed a “middle role” to connect tourists and local residents. The process by which tourists share the meaning of banjar, subak, and ritual is part of the process of acquiring existential authenticity.

Through the operation of the Jalan Melali program, young villagers were able to play a certain role in traditional ritual activities and achieve economic benefits at the same time. Jalan Melali program contributed to the achievement of the goal of a community for all age groups in Sebatu, and raised new possibilities in an area that went unrecognized as a tourist destination. (Figure 3)



<Figure 3> The ‘Jalan Melali’ Program achieves “sustainability,” the goal of ecotourism through the understanding of temples, *subak*, *banjar*, and the Balinese people.

V. Conclusion: Who Should Be Involved in the Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

In the past, anthropologists in tourism research have conceptualized tourism as a host's due destiny (Stronza 2001), or projected tourism

as an “authenticity” through tourism objects rather than the experiences of tourists (Cohen 1989; Bruner 1994; Wang 1999; Regmi & Walter 2016; Cohen 2018; Walter 2020). This approach leads to erroneous understanding of Balinese society focusing on the authenticity of tourism objects without understanding the historical and sociocultural dynamics of the host society. In particular, the understanding of tourism phenomena centered on tourism objects has disregarded the perception and experience of tourist who are receptors of these cultural products.

As a measure to overcome this problem, ecotourism is drawing attention from practical aspects. Many scholars are focusing on ecotourism to address the recent agendas of conservation and development in tourism (Büscher 2010; Fletcher & Neves 2012; Mowforth & Munt 2015; Büscher, Bremer, Fletcher, & Koot 2017).

The involvement of local residents and their role in the practice of ecotourism is also connected with the discriminatory view of swidden and irrigation farming by Geertz (1963). The slash-and-burn agriculture by farmers draw similarities to the natural environment of Bali destroyed by the locals. On the one hand, subaks and rice terraces, well developed by farmers, are presumed to represent a well-preserved natural environment in Bali.

However, the harm caused by the development process without the involvement of locals is considerable. Rice farming without a continuous supply of labor can be harmful for food production. In this situation, burning a swidden at high speed can be a solution. Ultimately, Geertz’s logic may be useful in explaining that economic policy should consider the specificity of the social and cultural organization of the region.

The village of Sabtu is small in size and population compared to the surrounding villages. Above all, there are no cultural tourism products that can be promoted and utilized as tourist destinations in Sabtu. Therefore, the Gianyar government, the upper administrative body, does not regard Sabtu Village as a target of tourism policy.

The relationship between tourism and village development in

Sebatu is a complex cultural phenomenon that assumes various relationships between residents and tourists. In the process of developing ecotourism since the 2000s, banjars on the outskirts of Ubud newly began to receive attention. The rise in interest can also be attributed to the increase in the number of long-term tourists that began to stay there. As the number of foreigners increased in the village, a new community formed around their country of origin or by a specific language, and the community is maintained through the medium of the market where organic products are sold and consumed. However, these community activities for information exchange also created another level of fissure with local residents (Jeong 2022).

The outcome of tourism products for foreigners, such as trekking illustrates the phenomenon where only selected long-term foreign residents and locals enjoyed their growing influence in the industry. In this disconnected situation, the pemuda of Sebatu acts as a mediator between tourists and residents. In addition, the tourism experience is more participatory for the tourists with social and economic benefits. More specifically, it broadened the visitor's understanding of village, agricultural, and religious cultures through direct observation of the daily life of the local residents.

Moreover, the interconnectedness of the young people, who are "cultural brokers" between tourists and residents provides a glimpse into new possibilities for regions like Sebatu that have not been noticed as tourist destinations. Spectacular scenery, great cultural heritage, and splendid rituals have driven Bali tourism to grow in the past but Jalan Melali program expanded the possibilities that subtle and peaceful village scenery and daily life of villagers of Sebatu can draw attention as a new tourist destination.

Finally, ecotourism is still enjoyed only by tourists from the so-called developed countries. This is because the practice of ecotourism in itself creates another economic problem. As foreigners and a few selected residents monopolize the tourism industry, costs natural rise. Even if the values pursued by ecotourism is to maintain local traditional culture and ensure fairness in the distribution of wealth acquired through tourism, only a handful of people enjoy the

benefits from this value.

Therefore, when cultural brokers made up of local residents actively engage in tourism, they can bring cultural, environmental and economic benefits to the village and demonstrate a “proper” practice of alternative tourism or ecotourism. Sebatu Village is an exemplary case of such ecotourism that promote responsible and sustainable tourism.

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